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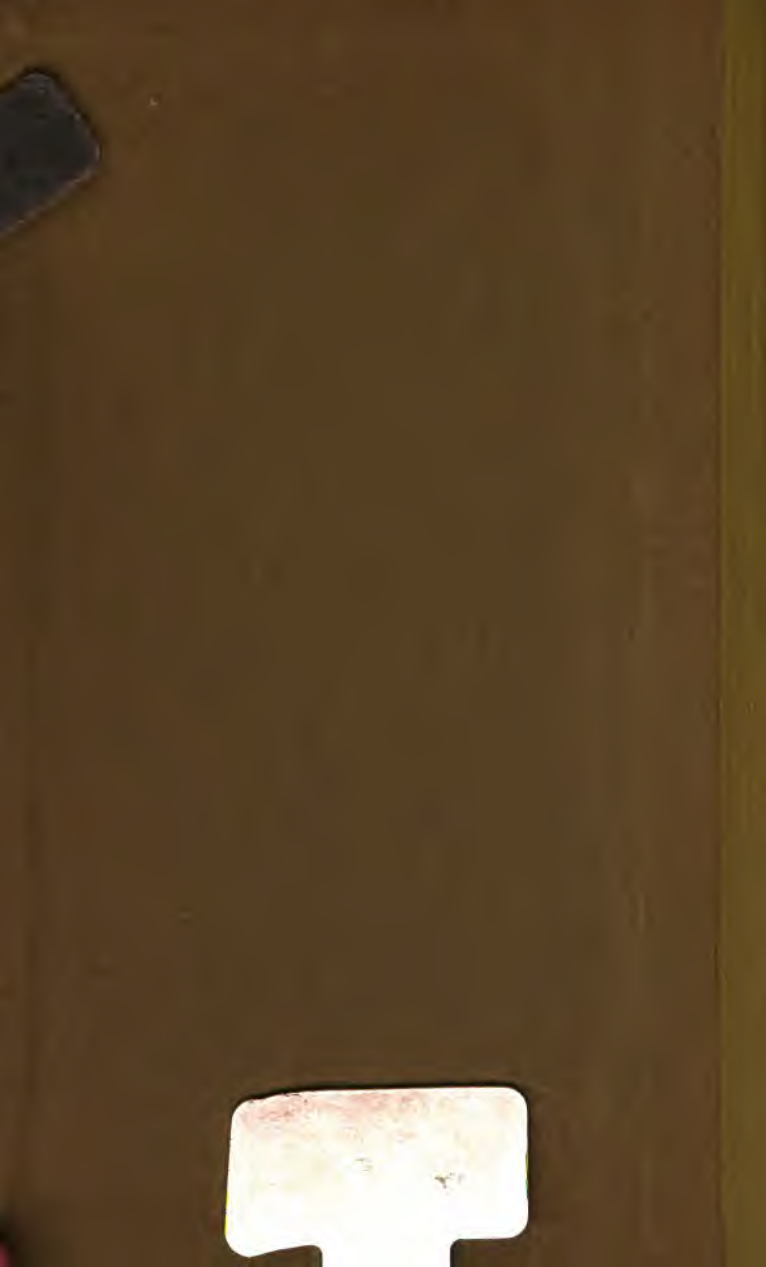
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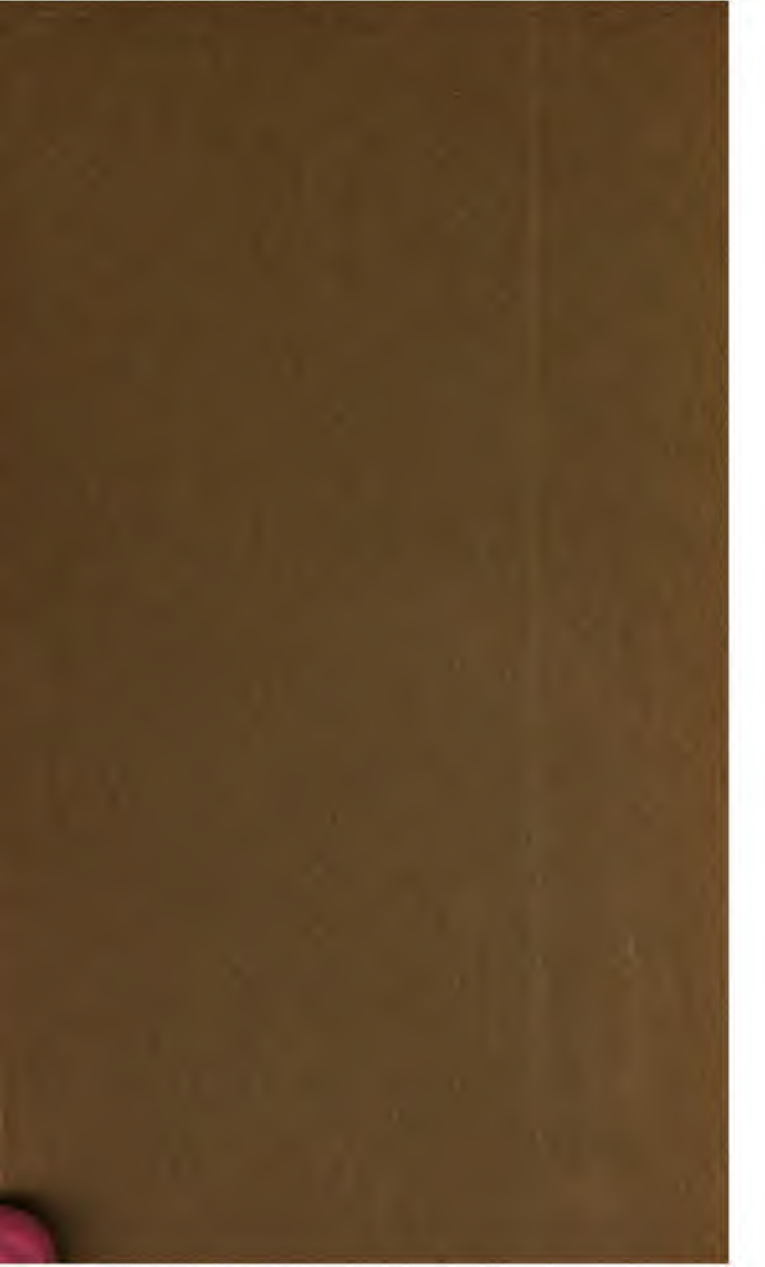
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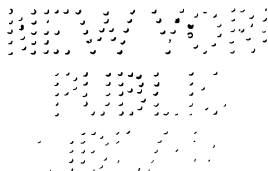
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SPANISH IDYLS.



CONCEPCION DE ARGUELLO.

PRESIDIO DE SAN FRANCISCO.

1800.

I.

LOOKING seaward, o'er the sand-hills stands
the fortress, old and quaint,
By the San Francisco friars lifted to their
patron saint, —

Sponsor to that wondrous city, now apostate
to the creed,
On whose youthful walls the Padre saw the
angel's golden reed;

All its trophies long since scattered, all its
blazon brushed away,
And the flag that flies above it but a triumph
of to-day.

Never scar of siege or battle challenges the
wandering eye, —
Never breach of warlike onset holds the curi-
ous passer-by ;

Only one sweet human fancy interweaves its
threads of gold
With the plain and homespun present, and a
love that ne'er grows old ;

Only one thing holds its crumbling walls
above the meaner dust, —

Listen to the simple story of a woman's love
and trust.

II.

Count von Resanoff, the Russian, envoy of the
mighty Czar,
Stood beside the deep embrasures where the
brazen cannon are.

He with grave provincial magnates long had
held serene debate
On the Treaty of Alliance and the high affairs
of state ;

He, from grave provincial magnates, oft had
turned to talk apart

With the Comandante's daughter, on the ques-
tions of the heart,

Until points of gravest import yielded slowly,
one by one,

And by Love was consummated what Diplo-
macy begun ;

Till beside the deep embrasures, where the
brazen cannon are,

He received the twofold contract for approval
of the Czar ;

Till beside the brazen cannon the betrothed
bade adieu,

And, from sally-port and gateway, north the
Russian eagles flew.

III.

Long beside the deep embrasures, where the
brazen cannon are,

Did they wait the promised bridegroom and
the answer of the Czar ;

Day by day on wall and bastion beat the hol-
low empty breeze, —

Day by day the sunlight glittered on the va-
cant, smiling seas ;

Week by week the near hills whitened in
their dusty leather cloaks, —

Week by week the far hills darkened from the
fringing plain of oaks ;

Till the rains came, and far-breaking, on the
fierce southwester tost,
Dashed the whole long coast with color, and
then vanished and were lost.

So each year the seasons shifted ; wet and
warm and drear and dry ;
Half a year of clouds and flowers,—half a
year of dust and sky.

Still it brought no ship nor message,—brought
no tidings ill nor meet
For the statesmanlike Commander, for the
daughter fair and sweet.

Yet she heard the varying message, voiceless
to all ears beside :

“ He will come,” the flowers whispered ; “ Come
no more,” the dry hills sighed.

Still she found him with the waters lifted by
the morning breeze, —

Still she lost him with the folding of the great
white-tented seas ;

Until hollows chased the dimples from her
cheeks of olive brown,

And at times a swift, shy moisture dragged the
long sweet lashes down ;

Or the small mouth curved and quivered as
for some denied caress,

And the fair young brow was knitted in an
infantine distress.

Then the grim Commander, pacing where the
brazen cannon are,

Comforted the maid with proverbs, — wisdom
gathered from afar ;

Bits of ancient observation by his fathers garnered,
each

As a pebble worn and polished in the current
of his speech :

“ ‘Those who wait the coming rider travel
twice as far as he’ ;

‘Tired wench and coming butter never did in
time agree.’

“ ‘He that getteth himself honey, though a
clown, he shall have flies’ ;

‘In the end God grinds the miller’; ‘In the
dark the mole has eyes.’

“ ‘He whose father is Alcalde, of his trial hath
no fear,’—

And be sure the Count has reasons that will
make his conduct clear.”

Then the voice sententious faltered, and the
wisdom it would teach

Lost itself in fondest trifles of his soft Cas-
tilian speech ;

And on “Concha,” “Conchitita,” and “Conchi-
ta” he would dwell

With the fond reiteration which the Spaniard
knows so well.

So with proverbs and caresses, half in faith
and half in doubt,
Every day some hope was kindled, flickered,
faded, and went out.

IV.

Yearly, down the hillside sweeping, came the
stately cavalcade,
Bringing revel to vaquero, joy and comfort to
each maid ;

Bringing days of formal visit, social feast and
rustic sport ;
Of bull-baiting on the plaza, of love-making in
the court.

Vainly then at Concha's lattice, — vainly as the
idle wind

Rose the thin high Spanish tenor that bespoke
the youth too kind ;

Vainly, leaning from their saddles, caballeros,
bold and fleet,

Plucked for her the buried chicken from be-
neath their mustang's feet ;

So in vain the barren hillsides with their gay
serapes blazed,

Blazed and vanished in the dust-cloud that
their flying hoofs had raised.

Then the drum called from the rampart, and
once more with patient mien

The Commander and his daughter each took
up the dull routine, —

Each took up the petty duties of a life apart
and lone,
Till the slow years wrought a music in its
dreary monotone.

V.

Forty years on wall and bastion swept the
hollow idle breeze,
Since the Russian eagle fluttered from the
California seas.

Forty years on wall and bastion wrought its
slow but sure decay ;

And St. George's cross was lifted in the port
of Monterey.

And the citadel was lighted, and the hall was
gayly drest,

All to honor Sir George Simpson, famous trav-
eller and guest.

Far and near the people gathered to the cost-
ly banquet set.

And exchanged congratulation with the Eng-
lish baronet ;

Till the formal speeches ended, and amidst the
laugh and wine

Some one spoke of Concha's lover, — heedless
of the warning sign.

Quickly then cried Sir George Simpson :

“ Speak no ill of him, I pray.

He is dead. He died, poor fellow, forty years
ago this day.

“ Died while speeding home to Russia, falling
from a fractious horse.

Left a sweetheart too, they tell me. Married,
I suppose, of course !

“ Lives she yet ? ” A death-like silence fell on
banquet, guests, and hall,
And a trembling figure rising fixed the awe-
struck gaze of all.

Two black eyes in darkened orbits gleamed
beneath the nun's white hood ;

Black serge hid the wasted figure, bowed and
stricken where it stood.

“ Lives she yet ? ” Sir George repeated. All
were hushed as Concha drew
Closer yet her nun’s attire. “ Señor, pardon,
she died too ! ”

RAMON.

REFUGIO MINE, NORTHERN MEXICO.

DRUNK and senseless in his place,
Prone and sprawling on his face,
More like brute than any man
Alive or dead, —
By his great pump out of gear,
Lay the peon engineer,
Waking only just to hear,
Overhead,
Angry tones that called his name,
Oaths and cries of bitter blame —

Woke to hear all this, and waking, turned
and fled !

“ To the man who ’ll bring to me,”

Cried Intendant Harry Lee, —

Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine, —

“ Bring the sot alive or dead,

I will give to him,” he said,

“ Fifteen hundred *pesos* down,

Just to set the rascal’s crown

Underneath this heel of mine :

• Since but death

Deserves the man whose deed,

Be it vice or want of heed,

Stops the pumps that give us breath, —

Stops the pumps that suck the death

From the poisoned lower levels of the mine !”

No one answered, for a cry
From the shaft rose up on high ;
And shuffling, scrambling, tumbling from be-
low,
Came the miners each, the bolder
Mounting on the weaker's shoulder,
Grappling, clinging to their hold or
Letting go,
As the weaker gasped and fell
From the ladder to the well, —
To the poisoned pit of hell
Down below !

“ To the man who sets them free,”
Cried the foreman, Harry Lee, —
Harry Lee, the English foreman of the
mine, —

“ Brings them out and sets them free,

I will give that man,” said he,

“ Twice that sum, who with a rope

Face to face with Death shall cope.

Let him come who dares to hope !”

“ Hold your peace !” some one replied,

Standing by the foreman’s side ;

“ There has one already gone, whoe’er he be !”

Then they held their breath with awe,

Pulling on the rope, and saw

Fainting figures reappear,

On the black rope swinging clear,

Fastened by some skilful hand from below ;

Till a score the level gained,

And but one alone remained, —

He the hero and the last,

He whose skilful hand made fast
The long line that brought them back to hope
and cheer !

Haggard, gasping, down dropped he
At the feet of Harry Lee, —
Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine ;
“ I have come,” he gasped, “ to claim
Both rewards. Señor, my name
Is Ramon !
I ’m the drunken engineer, —
I ’m the coward, Señor —” Here
• He fell over, by that sign
Dead as stone !

FOR THE KING.

NORTHERN MEXICO.

1640.

AS you look from the plaza at Leon, west
You can see her house, but the view is
best

From the porch of the church where she lies
at rest,

Where much of her past still lives, I think,
In the scowling brows and sidelong blink
Of the worshipping throng that rise or sink

To the waxen saints that, yellow and lank,
Lean out from their niches, rank on rank,
With a bloodless Saviour on either flank ;

In the gouty pillars, whose cracks begin
To show the *adobe* core within, —
A soul of earth in a whitewashed skin.

And I think that the moral of all, you'll say,
Is the sculptured legend that moulds away
On a tomb in the choir : " Por el Rey."

" Por el Rey." Well, the king is gone,
Ages ago, and the Hapsburg one
Shot — but the rock of the church lives on.

“ Por el Rey:” What matters, indeed,
If king or president succeed
To a country haggard with sloth and greed,

As long as one granary is fat,
And yonder priest, in a shovel hat,
Peeps out from the bin like a sleek brown
rat!

What matters? Naught, if it serves to bring
The legend nearer, — no other thing, —
We'll spare the moral, “Live the King!”

Two hundred years ago, they say,
The viceroy, Marquis of Monte-Rey,
Rode, with his retinue, that way.

Grave as befitted Spain's grandee,
Grave as the substitute should be
Of His Most Catholic Majesty,

Yet from his black plume's curving grace
To his slim, black gauntlet's smaller space,
Exquisite as a piece of lace !

Two hundred years ago — e'en so —
The marquis stopped where the lime-trees
 blow,
While Leon's seneschal bent him low

And begged that the marquis would that
 night take

His humble roof for the royal sake,
And then, as the custom demanded, spake

The usual wish that his guest would hold
The house, and all that it might infold,
As his — with the bride scarce three days old.

Be sure that the marquis, in his place,
Replied to all with the measured grace
Of chosen speech and unmoved face,

Nor raised his head till his black plume swept
The hem of the lady's robe, who kept
Her place, as her husband backward step.

And then (I know not how nor why)
A subtle flame in the lady's eye —
Unseen by the courtiers standing by —

Burned through his lace and titled wreath,
Burned through his body's jeweled sheath,
Till it touched the steel of the man beneath!

(And yet, mayhap, no more was meant
Than to point a well-worn compliment,
And the lady's beauty, her worst intent.)

Howbeit, the marquis bowed again :
" Who rules with awe well serveth Spain,
But best whose law is love made plain."

Be sure that night no pillow prest
The seneschal, but with the rest
Watched, — as was due a royal guest, —

Watched from the wall till he saw the square
Fill with the moonlight, white and bare, —
Watched till he saw two shadows fare

Out from his garden, where the shade
That the old church-tower and belfry made,
Like a benedictory hand was laid.

Few words spoke the seneschal as he turned
To his nearest sentry: "These monks have
learned
That stolen fruit is sweetly earned.

"Myself shall punish yon acolyte
Who gathers my garden grapes by night ;
Meanwhile, wait thou till the morning light."

Yet not till the sun was riding high
Did the sentry meet his commander's eye,
Nor then — till the viceroy stood by.

To the lovers of grave formalities
No greeting was ever so fine, I wis,
As this host's and guest's high courtesies!

The seneschal feared, as the wind was west,
A blast from Morena had chilled his rest?
The viceroy languidly confest

That cares of state, and — he dared to say —
Some fears that the king could not repay
The thoughtful zeal of his host, some way

Had marred his rest. Yet he trusted much
None shared his wakefulness! Though such
Indeed might be! If he dared to touch

A theme so fine — the bride, perchance,
Still slept? At least, they missed her glance
To give this greeting countenance.

Be sure that the seneschal, in turn,
Was deeply bowed with the grave concern
Of the painful news his guest should learn:

“Last night, to her father’s dying bed
By a priest was the lady summonéd;
Nor know we yet how well she sped,

“But hope for the best.” The grave viceroy
(Though grieved his visit had such alloy)
Must still wish the seneschal great joy

Of a bride so true to her filial trust !
Yet now as the day waxed on, they must
To horse, if they’d ’scape the noonday dust.

“Nay,” said the seneschal, “at least,
To mend the news of this funeral priest,
Myself shall ride as your escort, east.”

The viceroy bowed. Then turned aside
To his nearest follower: “With me ride—
You and Felipe — on either side.

“And list! Should anything me befall,
Mischance of ambush or musket-ball,
Cleave to his saddle yon seneschal!

“No more.” Then gravely in accents clear
Took formal leave of his late good cheer:
Whiles the seneschal whispered a musketeer,

Carelessly stroking his pommel top,
“If from the saddle ye see me drop,
Riddle me quickly yon solemn fop!”

So these, with many a compliment,
Each on his one dark thought intent,
With grave politeness onward went,

Riding high, and in sight of all,
Viceroy, escort, and seneschal,
Under the shade of the Almandral.

Holding their secret, hard and fast,
Silent and grave, they ride at last
Into the dusty travelled Past ;

Even like this they passed away
Two hundred years ago to-day.
What of the lady ? Who shall say ?

Do the souls of the dying ever yearn
To some favored spot for the dust's return —
For the homely peace of the family urn ?

I know not. Yet did the seneschal,
Chancing in after years to fall
Pierced by a Flemish musket-ball,

Call to his side a trusty friar
And bid him swear, as his last desire,
To bear his corse to San Pedro's choir

At Leon, where 'neath a shield azúre
Should his mortal frame find sepulture;
This much, for the pains Christ did endure.

Be sure that the friar loyally
Fulfilled his trust by land and sea,
Till the spires of Leon silently

Rose through the green of the Almandral,
As if to beckon the seneschal
To his kindred dust 'neath the choir wall.

I wot that the saints on either side
Leaned from their niches open-eyed,
To see the doors of the church swing wide —

That the wounds of the Saviour on either
flank

Bled fresh, as the mourners, rank by rank,
Went by with the coffin, clank on clank,

For why? When they raised the marble
door

Of the tomb untouched for years before,
The friar swooned on the choir floor ;

For there, in her laces and festal dress,
Lay the dead man's wife, her loveliness
Scarcely changed by her long duress ;

As on the night she had passed away —
Only that near her a dagger lay,
With the written legend, " Por el Rey."

What was their greeting — the groom and
bride,

They whom that steel and the years divide ?
'I know not. Here they lie side by side.

Side by side. Though the king has his way,
Even the dead at last have their day.
Make you the moral. " Por el Rey."

DON DIEGO OF THE SOUTH.

REFECTORY-MISSION SAN GABRIEL.

1869.

“GOOD,” said the Padre, “believe me still,

Don Giovanni, or what you will, —

The type’s eternal! We knew him here

As Don Diego del Sud. I fear

The story’s no new one. Will you hear?

One of those spirits you can’t tell why

God has permitted. Therein I

Have the advantage, for I hold

That wolves are sent to the purest fold.

And we save the wolf, if we'd get the lamb.

You're no believer! Good! I am.

Well, for some purpose, I grant you dim,

The Don loved women, and they loved him.

Each thought herself his *last* love! Worse,

Many believed that they were his *first*!

And such are those creatures, since the Fall,

The very doubt had a charm for all!

You laugh! You are young—but I—indeed

I have no patience.

To proceed.

You saw, as you passed through the upper
town,

The *Encinal*, where the road goes down

To San Felipe. There one morn
They found Diego, his mantle torn,
And as many stabs through his doublet's band
As there were wronged husbands — you understand ?

‘Dying,’ — so said the gossips. ‘Dead,’
Was what the friars who found him said.
Good ! *Quien sabe ?* Who else should
know ? —

It was a hundred years ago.
There was a funeral. Small indeed —
Private. What would you ?

To proceed.

Scarcely the year had flown. One night
The *comandante* awoke in fright, —

Hearing below his casement's bar
The well-known twang of the Don's guitar —
And rushed to the window — just to see
His wife a-swoon on the balcony.

One week later Don Juan Ramirez
Found his own daughter, the Doña Inez,
Pale as a ghost, leaning out to hear
The song of that phantom cavalier.
Even Alcalde Pedro Blas
Saw, it was said, through his niece's glass
The shade of Diego twice repass.

What the gentlemen each confessed
Heaven and the Church only knows. At
best

The case was a bad one. How to deal
With Sin as a ghost they could n't but feel
Was an awful thing. Till a certain Fray
Humbly offered to show the way.

And the way was this: Did I say before
That the Fray was a stranger. No, — Señor?
Strange! Very strange! I should have said
That the very week that the Don lay dead
He came among us! Bread he broke
Silent; nor ever to one he spoke.
So had he vowed it. Below his brows
His face was hidden. There are such vows.

Strange, are they not? You do not use
Snuff? A bad habit!

Well, the views

Of the Fray were this : That the penance
done

By the caballeros was right ; but one
Was due from the *cause*, and that in brief,
Was Donna Dolores Gomez, chief,
And Inez, Sanchicha, Concepcion,
And Carmen. Well, half the girls in town
On his tablets the Friar had written down.

These were to come on a certain day
And ask at the hands of this pious Fray
For absolution. That done, small fear
But the shade of Diego would disappear.

They came, each knelt in her turn and place
To the pious Fray with his hidden face
And voiceless lips, and each again

Took back her soul freed from spot or stain,
Till the Doña Inez, with eyes downcast
And a tear on their fringes, knelt her last.

And then — perhaps that her voice was low
From fear or from shame — the monks said
so —

But the Fray leaned forward, when swiftly
all

Were thrilled by a scream, and saw her fall
Fainting beside the confessional.

And so was the ghost of Diego laid
As the Fray had said. No more his shade
Was seen at San Gabriel's Mission. Eh?
The girl interests you? I dare say!

‘ Nothing,’ she said, when they brought her.
to,

‘ Nothing, — a faintness.’ They spake more
true

Who said ’t was a stubborn soul. But then
Women are women, and men are men.

So to return. As I said before,
Having got the wolf, by the same high law
We saved the lamb in the wolf’s own jaw ;
And that’s my story. The tale, I fear,
But poorly told. Yet, it strikes me, here
Is stuff for a moral. What’s your view ?
You smile, Don Pancho, ah ! that’s like you !”

FRIAR PEDRO'S RIDE.

IT was the morning season of the year ;

It was the morning era of the land ;

The watercourses rang full loud and clear ;

Portala's cross stood where Portala's hand
Had planted it when Faith was taught by
Fear ;

When Monks 'and Missions held the sole
command

Of all that shore beside the peaceful sea

Where spring-tides beat their long-drawn re-
veille.

Out of the Mission of San Luis Rey,

All in that brisk, tumultuous spring weather,
Rode Friar Pedro, in a pious way,

With six dragoons in cuirasses of leather,
Each armed alike for either prayer or fray,

Handcuffs and missals they had slung together;
And as an aid the gospel truth to scatter
Each swung a lasso—*alias* a “riata.”

In sooth, that year the harvest had been slack,

The crop of converts scarce worth comput-
tion ;

Some souls were lost, whose owners had turned
back

To save their bodies frequent flagellation,
And some preferred the songs of birds, alack,
To Latin matins and their soul's salvation,

And thought their own wild whoopings were
less dreary
Than Father Pedro's droning *miserere*.

To bring them back to matins and to prime,
To pious works and secular submission,
To prove to them that liberty was crime,
This was in fact the Padre's present mission ;
To get new souls perchance at the same time
And bring them to a "sense of their condition" —

That easy phrase which, in the past and present,
Means making that condition most unpleasant.

He saw the glebe land guiltless of a furrow ;
He saw the wild oats wrestle on the hill ;

He saw the gopher working in his burrow ;

He saw the squirrel scampering at his will ;

He saw all this, and felt no doubt a thorough

And deep conviction of God's goodness ; still

He failed to see that in His glory He

Yet left the humblest of His creatures free.

He saw the flapping crow, whose frequent
note

Voiced the monotony of land and sky,

Mocking with graceless wing and rusty coat

His priestly presence as he trotted by.

He would have cursed the bird by bell and
rote,

But other game just then was in his eye—

A savage camp, whose occupants preferred

Their heathen darkness to the living Word.

He rang his bell, and at the martial sound

Twelve silver spurs their jingling rowels
clashed ;

Six horses sprang across the level ground

As six dragoons in open order dashed ;
Above their heads the lassos circled round ;
In every eye a pious fervor flashed ;

They charged the camp, and in one moment
more

They lassoed six and reconverted four.

The Friar saw the conflict from a knoll,

And sang *Laus Deo*, and cheered on his men :
“ Well thrown, Bautista, — that ’s another soul !

After him, Gomez, — try it once again ;
This way, Felipe ! there the heathen stole ;

Bones of St. Francis ! — surely that makes *ten* ;

Te deum laudamus, — but they 're very wild ;
Non nobis dominus, — all right, my child."

When at that moment — as the story goes —

A certain squaw, who had her foes eluded,
Ran past the Friar, — just before his nose.

He stared a moment, and in silence brooded,
Then in his breast a pious frenzy rose

And every other prudent thought excluded ;
He caught a lasso, and dashed in a canter
After that Occidental Atalanta.

High o'er his head he swirled the dreadful
noose,

But as the practice was quite unfamiliar,
His first cast tore Felipe's captive loose,
And almost choked Tiburcio Camilla;

And might have interfered with that brave
youth's

Ability to gorge the tough *tortilla* ;

But all things come by practice, and at last
His flying slip-knot caught the maiden fast.

Then rose above the plain a mingled yell

Of rage and triumph, — a demoniac whoop ;
The Padre heard it like a passing knell,

And would have loosened his unchristian loop ;
But the tough raw-hide held the captive well,

And held, alas, too well the captor-dupe ;
For with one bound the savage fled amain,
Dragging horse, friar, down the lonely plain.

Down the *arroyo*, out across the mead,

By heath and hollow, sped the flying maid,

Dragging behind her still the panting steed

And helpless friar, who in vain essayed
To cut the lasso or to check his speed.

He felt himself beyond all human aid,
And trusted to the saints,—and for that matter
To some weak spot in Felipe's *riata*.

Alas! the lasso had been duly blessed,

And, like baptism, held the flying wretch.
A doctrine that the priest had oft expressed,—
Which, like the lasso, might be made to stretch

But would not break,—so neither could divest

Themselves of it, but like some awful *fetch*,
The holy friar had to recognize
His fate prophetic in that heathen guise.

He saw the glebe land guiltless of a furrow ;

He saw the wild oats wrestle on the hill ;

He saw the gopher standing in his burrow ;

He saw the squirrel scampering at his will ;

He saw all this, and felt no doubt how thorough

The contrast was to his condition ; still

The squaw kept onward to the sea, till night

And the cold sea-fog hid them both from sight.

The morning came above the serried coast,

Lighting the snow-peaks with its beacon-fires,

Driving before it all the fleet-winged host

Of chattering birds above the Mission spires,

Filling the land with light and joy, — but most

The savage woods with all their leafy lyres ;

In pearly tints, and opal flame and fire
The morning came, — but not the holy Friar.

Weeks passed away. In vain the Fathers
sought

Some trace or token that might tell his story.
Some thought him dead, or like Elijah caught
Up to the heavens in a blaze of glory.

In this surmise, some miracles were wrought
On his account, and souls in purgatory
Were thought to profit from his intercession —
In brief, his absence made a "deep impression."

A twelvemonth passed; the welcome spring
once more

Made green the hills beside the white-faced
Mission,

Spread her bright dais by the western shore,
And sat enthroned, — a most resplendent
vision.

The heathen converts' thronged the chapel-
door

At morning mass; when, says the old tra-
dition,

A frightful whoop throughout the church re-
sounded,

And to their feet the congregation bounded.

A tramp of hoofs upon the beaten course —

Then came a sight that made the bravest
quail :

A phantom friar, on a spectre horse,

Dragged by a creature decked with horns
and tail.

By the lone Mission, with the whirlwind's
force,

They madly swept, and left a sulphurous
trail —

And that was all — enough to tell the story
And leave unblessed those souls in purgatory.

And ever after, on that fatal day

That Friar Pedro rode abroad lassoing,

A ghostly couple came and went away

With savage whoop and heathenish hal-
loing,

Which brought discredit on San Luis Rey,

And proved the Mission's ruin and undoing ;

For ere ten years had passed, the squaw and

Friar

Performed to empty walls and fallen spire.

The Mission is no more ; upon its walls

The golden lizards slip, or breathless pause
Still as the sunshine brokenly that falls

Through crannied roof and spider-webs of
gauze ;

No more the bell its solemn warning calls, —

A holier silence thrills and overawes ;
And the sharp lights and shadows of To-Day
Outline the Mission of San Luis Rey.

AT THE HACIENDA.

KNOW I not whom thou mayst be
Carved upon this olive-tree,—

“Manuela of La Torre,”

For, around on broken walls

Summer sun and Spring rain falls,

And in vain the low wind calls

“Manuela of La Torre.”

Of that song no words remain

But the musical refrain:

“Manuela of La Torre.”

Yet at night, when winds are still,

Tinkles on the distant hill

A guitar, and words that thrill

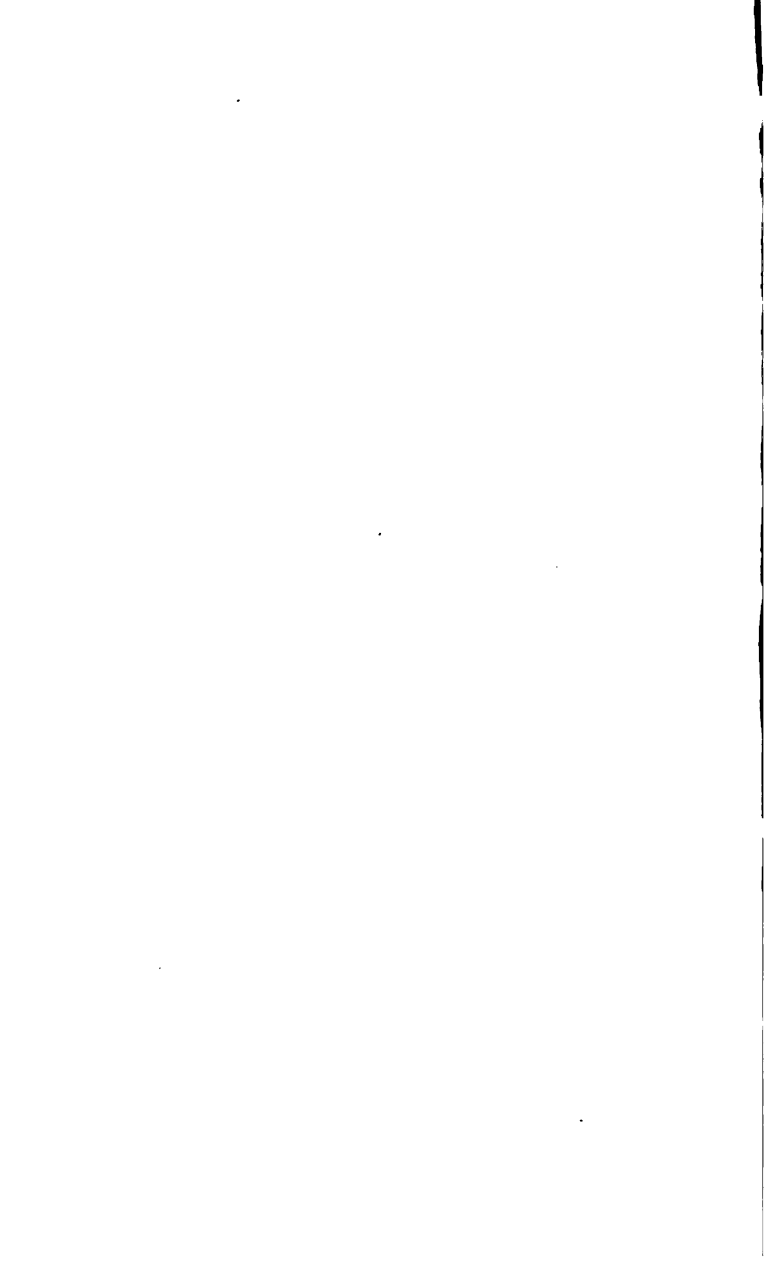
Tell to me the old, old story, —

Old when first thy charms were sung,

Old when these old walls were young,

“Manuela of La Torre.”

IN DIALECT.



LUKE.

IN THE COLORADO PARK.

1873.

WOT's that you're readin'?—a novel?

A novel,—well, dern my skin!

You a man grown and bearded and histin'
such stuff ez that in,—

Stuff about gals and their sweethearts! No
wonder you're thin ez a knife.

Look at me!—clar two hundred,—and never
read one in my life!

That's my opinion o' novels. And ez to their
lyin' round here,

They belonged to the Jedge's daughter, — the
Jedge who came up last year

On account of his lungs and the mountains
and the balsam o' pine and fir ;

And his daughter, — well, she read novels, and
that's what's the matter with her.

Yet she allers was sweet on the Jedge, and
she stuck by him day and night,
Alone in the cabin up yer, — till she grew like
a ghost, all white.

She wus only a slip of a thing, ez light and
ez up and away

Ez rifle-smoke blown through the woods, but
she was n't my kind, — no way !

Speaking o' gals, d'ye mind that house ez you
rise the hill,

A mile and a half from White's, and jist
above Mattingly's mill?

You do? Well now *thar's* a gal! What, you
saw her? O, come now, *thar*, quit!

She was only bedevlin' you boys, for to me
she don't cotton one bit.

Now she's what I call a gal, — ez pretty and
plump ez a quail;

Teeth ez white ez a hound's and they 'd go
through a tenpenny nail;

Eyes that kin snap like a cap. So she asked
to know "whar I was hid."

She did! O, it's jist like her sass, for she's
peart ez a Katy-did.

But what was I talking of? — O, the Jedge
and his daughter, — she read
Novels the whole day long, and I reckon she
read them abed,
And sometimes she read them out loud to the
Jedge on the porch where he sat,
And 't was how "Lord Augustus" said this,
and how "Lady Blanche" she said that.

But the sickest of all that I heerd, was a yarn
thet they read 'bout a chap,
"Leather-stocking" by name, and a hunter
chock full o' the greenest o' sap;
And they asked me to hear, but I says, "Miss
Mabel, not any for me ;
When I likes I kin sling my own lies, and
thet chap and I should n't agree."

Yet somehow or other she was always sayin' I
brought her to mind
Of folks about whom she had read, or suthin
belike of thet kind,
And thar warn't no end o' the names that she
give me thet summer up here,
"Robin Hood," "Leather-stockin'," "Rob Roy,"
— O, I tell you, the critter was queer.

And yet ef she had n't been spiled, she was
harmless enough in her way,
She could jabber in French to her dad, and
they said that she knew how to play,
And she worked me that shot-pouch up thar,
— which the man does n't live ez kin use,
And slippers — you see 'em down yer — ez
would cradle an Injin's pappoose.

Yet along o' them novels, you see she was
wastin' and mopin' away,

And then she got shy with her tongue, and at
last she had nothin' to say ;

And whenever I happened around, her face it
was hid by a book,

And it was n't until she left that she give me
ez much ez a look.

And this was the way it was. It was night
when I kem up here .

To say to 'em all "good by," for I reckoned
to go for deer

At "sun up" the day they left. So I shook
'em all round by the hand,

'Cept Mabel, and she was sick, ez they give
me to understand.

But jist ez I passed the house next morning at
dawn, some one,

Like a little waver o' mist, got up on the hill
with the sun ;

Miss Mabel it was, all alone, — wrapped up in
a mantle o' lace, —

And she stood there straight in the road, with
a touch o' the sun in her face.

And she looked me right in the eye, — I'd
seen suthin like it before

When I hunted a wounded doe to the edge o'
the Clear Lake shore,

And I had my knee on its neck, and jist was
a raisin' my knife

When it give me a look like that, and — well,
it got off with its life.

“ We are going to-day,” she said, “ and I
thought I would say good by
To you in your own house, Luke, — these
woods, and the bright blue sky !
You’ve always been kind to us, Luke, and
papa has found you still
As good as the air he breathes, and whole-
some as Laurel Tree Hill.

“ And we’ll always think of you, Luke, as the
thing we could not take away ;
The balsam that dwells in the woods, the
rainbow that lives in the spray.
And you’ll sometimes think of *me*, Luke, as
you know you once used to say,
A rifle-smoke blown through the woods, a
moment, but never to stay.”

And then we shook hands. She turned, but
a-sudden she tottered and fell,

And I caught her sharp by the waist, and
held her a minit, — well,

It was only a minit, you know, that ez cold
and ez white she lay

Ez a snow-flake here on my breast, and then
— well, she melted away —

And was gone * * * And thar are her books ;
but I says not any for me,

Good enough may be for some, but them and
I might n't agree.

They spiled a decent gal ez might hev made
some chap a wife,

And look at me ! — clar two hundred, — and
never read one in my life !

TRUTHFUL JAMES TO THE EDITOR.

IN THE MODOC WAR.

1873.

WHICH it is not my style
To produce needless pain
By statements that rile,
Or that go 'gin the grain,
But here's Captain Jack still a livin', and Nye
has no skelp on his brain !

On that Caucasian head

There is no crown of hair.

It has gone, it has fled !

And Echo sez "where?"

And I asks, "Is this Nation a White Man's,
and is generally things on the square?"

She was known in the camp

As "Nye's other squaw,"

And folks of that stamp

Hez no rights in the Law,

But is treacherous, sinful, and slimy, as Nye
might hev well known before.

But she said that she knew

Where the Injins was hid,

And the statement was true,

For it seemed that she did ;

Since she led William where he was covered
by seventeen Modocs, and — slid !

Then they reached for his hair ;

But Nye sez, " By the Law
Of Nations, forbear !

I surrenders, — no more :
And I looks to be treated, you hear me ? — as
a pris'ner, a pris'ner of war ! "

But Captain Jack rose

And he sez " It's too thin.
Such statements as those
It's too late to begin.

There's a *Modoc indictment* agin you, O Pale-
face, and you're goin' in !

" You stole Schonchin's squaw

In the year 'sixty-two ;
It was in 'sixty-four

That Long Jack you went through,
And you burned Nasty Jim's rancheria and
his wives and his papposes too.

"This gun in my hand
Was sold me by you
'Gainst the law of the land,
And I grieves it is true!"

And he buried his face in his blanket and
wept as he hid it from view.

"But you're tried and condemned,
And skelping's your doom,"
And he paused and he hemmed,—
But why this resume?

He was skelped 'gainst the custom of Nations,
and cut off like a rose in its bloom.

So I asks without guile,

And I trusts not in vain,

If this is the style

That is going to obtain,—

If here's Captain Jack still a-livin, and Nye
with no skelp on his brain?

“THE BABES IN THE WOODS.”

BIG PINE FLAT.

1871.

“SOMETHING characteristic,” eh !

Humph ! I reckon you mean by that
Something that happened in our way,

Here at the crossin’ of Big Pine Flat.

Times are n’t now as they used to be

When gold was flush and the boys were
frisky,

And a man would pull out his battery

For anything,—may be the price of whiskey.

Nothing of that sort ; eh ! That's strange,

Why, I thought you might be diverted,
Hearing how Jones of the Red Rock Range,
Drew his "Hints to the Unconverted,"
And saying, "Where will you have it?" shot
Cherokee Bob at the last Debating!

What was the question ? I forgot,—

But Jones did n't like Bob's way of stat-
ing.

Nothing of that kind, eh ? You mean

Something milder ? Let's see. O, Joe !
Tell to the stranger that little scene
Out of the "Babes in the Woods." You
know

"Babes" was the name we gave 'em, sir,

Two lean lads in their teens, and greener

Than even the belt of spruce and fir

Where they built their nest, and each day
grew leaner.

No one knew where they came from. None

Cared to know if they had a mother.

Runaway school-boys, may be. One

Tall and dark as a spruce ; the other
Blue and gold in the eyes and hair,

Soft and low in his speech, but rarely
Talking with us ; and we did n't care
To get at their secret at all unfairly.

For they were so quiet, so sad and shy,

Content to trust each other solely,
That somehow we'd always shut one eye
And never seem to observe them wholly

As they passed to their work. 'T was a worn-
out claim

And it paid them grub. They could live
without it,

For the boys had a way of leaving game
In their tents, and forgetting all about it.

Yet no one asked for their secret. Dumb
It lay in their big eyes' heavy hollows.

It was understood that no one should come
To their tent unawares, save the bees and
the swallows.

So they lived alone. Until one warm night
I was sitting here at the tent-door so, sir,
When out of the sunset's rosy light
Up rode the sheriff of Mariposa.

I knew at once there was something wrong,
For his hand and his voice shook just a
little,

And there is n't much you can fetch along
To make the sinews of Jack Hill brittle.

"Go warn the Babes!" he whispered hoarse;
"Tell them I'm coming,—to get and scur-
ry,

For I've got a story that's bad, and worse,
I've got a warrant; G—d d—n it, hurry."

Too late! they had seen him cross the hill;

I ran to their tent and found them lying
Dead in each other's arms, and still

Clasping the drug they had taken flying.

And there lay their secret, cold and bare,

Their life, their trial, the old, old story!

For the sweet blue eyes and the golden hair,
Was a *woman's* shame and a *woman's* glory.

“ Who were they ? ” Ask no more, or ask
The sun that visits their grave so lightly ;
Ask of the whispering reeds, or task
The mourning crickets that chirrup nightly.
All of their life but its love forgot,
Everything tender and soft and mystic.
These are our “ Babes in the Woods ” ; you ’ve
got,
Well — human nature ! — that ’s characteris-
tic.

AFTER THE ACCIDENT.

MOUTH OF THE SHAFT.

WHAT I want is my husband, sir, —

And if you're a man, sir,

You'll give me an answer, —

Where is my Joe?

Penrhyn, sir, Joe, —

Caernovanshire.

Six months ago

Since we came here —

Eh? — Ah, you know!

Well, I *am* quiet

And still.

But I must stand here,

And will!

Please — I'll be strong —

If you'll just let me wait

Inside o' that gate

Till the news comes along.

“Negligence” —

That was the cause ; —

Butchery ! —

Are there no laws, —

Laws to protect such as we?

Well, then ! —

I won't raise my voice.

There men !

I won't make no noise.

Only you just let me be.

Four, only four — did he say —

Saved ! and the other ones ? — Eh ?

Why do they call ?

Why are they all

Looking and coming this way !

What's that ? — a message ?

I'll take it.

I know his wife, sir,

I'll break it.

“ Foreman ! ”

Ay, ay !

"Out by and by," —

"Just saved his life."

"Say to his wife

Soon he'll be free,"

Will I? — God bless you,

It's *me*!

THE GHOST THAT JIM SAW.

WHY, as to that, said the engineer,
Ghosts ain't things we are apt to fear,
Spirits don't fool with levers much,
And throttle-valves don't take to such ;
And as for Jim, —
What happened to him
Was one half fact and t' other half whim !

Running one night on the line, he saw
A house — as plain as the moral law —

Just by the moonlit bank, and thence
Came a drunken man with no more sense
Than to drop on the rail,
Flat as a flail,
As Jim drove by with the midnight mail.

Down went the patents. Steam reversed,
Too late! for there came a "thud." Jim
cursed,

As the fireman, there in the cab with him,
Kinder stared in the face of Jim,

And says, "What now?"

Says Jim, "What now!"

I've just run over a man, — that's how!"

The fireman stared at Jim. They ran
Back, but they never found house nor man, —

Nary a shadow within a mile.

Jim turned pale, but he tried to smile,

Then on he tore,

Ten mile or more,

In quicker time than he 'd made afore.

Would you believe it ! the very next night

Up rose that house in the moonlight white,

Out comes the chap and drops as before,

Down goes the brake and the rest encore,

And so, in fact,

Each night that act

Occurred, till folks swore Jim was cracked.

Humph ! let me see ; it's a year now, 'most,

That I met Jim, East, and says, " How's your
ghost ? "

"Gone," says Jim ; "and more, it's plain
That ghost don't trouble me again.

I thought I shook

That ghost when I took

A place on an Eastern line, — but look!

"What should I meet, the first trip out,
But the very house we talked about,
And the selfsame man! 'Well,' says I, 'I
guess

It's time to stop this yer foolishness' ;

So I crammed on steam,

When there came a scream

From my fireman, — that jest broke my dream.

"'You've killed somebody!' Says I, 'Not
much,

I've been thar often, and thar ain't no such,
And now I'll prove it!' Back we ran,
And, — darn my skin! — but thar *was* a man
On the rail, dead,
Smashed in the head, —
Now I call that meanness!" That's all Jim
said.

THE IDYL OF BATTLE HOLLOW.

WAR OF THE REBELLION.

1864.

N O, I won't, — thar, now, so ! And it ain't
nothin', — no !

And thar's nary to tell that you folks yer
don't know ;

And it's "Belle, tell us, do !" and it's "Belle,
is it true ?"

And "Wot's this yer yarn of the Major and
you ?"

Till I'm sick of it all, — so I am, but I s'pose

Thet is nothin' to you. Well then, listen !
yer goes :

It was after the fight, and around us all night
Thar was poppin' and shootin' a powerful
sight ;

And the niggers had fled, and Aunt Chlo' was
abed,

And Pinky and Milly were hid in the shed ;
And I ran out at daybreak and nothin' was
nigh

But the growlin' of cannon low down in the
sky.

And I saw not a thing as I ran to the spring,
But a splintered fence-rail and a broken-down
swing,

And a bird said "Kerchee!" as it sat on a tree,
As if it was lonesome and glad to see me;
And I filled up my pail and was risin' to go,
When up comes the Major a canterin' slow.

When he saw me he drew in his reins, and
then threw

On the gate-post his bridle, and — what does
he do

But come down where I sat; and he lifted his
hat,

And he says—well, thar ain't any need to tell
that—

'T was some foolishness, sure, but it 'mounted
to this,

Thet he asked for a drink, and he wanted—
a kiss.

Then I said (I was mad), "For the water, my
lad,

You're too big, and must stoop ; for a kiss, it's
as bad, —

You ain't near big enough." And I turned in
a huff,

When that Major he laid his white hand on
my cuff,

And he says, "You're a trump! Take my
pistol, don't fear!

But shoot the next man that insults you, my
dear."

Then he stooped to the pool, very quiet and
cool,

Leavin' me with that pistol stuck there like a
fool,

When thar flashed on my sight a quick glim-
mer of light

From the top of the little stone-fence on the
right,

And I knew 't was a rifle, and back of it all
Rose the face of that bushwhacker, Cherokee
Hall!

Then I felt in my dread that the moment the
head

Of the Major was lifted, the Major was dead ;
And I stood still and white, but Lord ! gals,
in spite

Of my care, that derved pistol went off in my
fright !

Went off—true as Gospil !—and, strangest of all,
It actooally injured that Cherokee Hall.

Thet's all,—now, go long. Yes, some folks
thinks it's wrong.

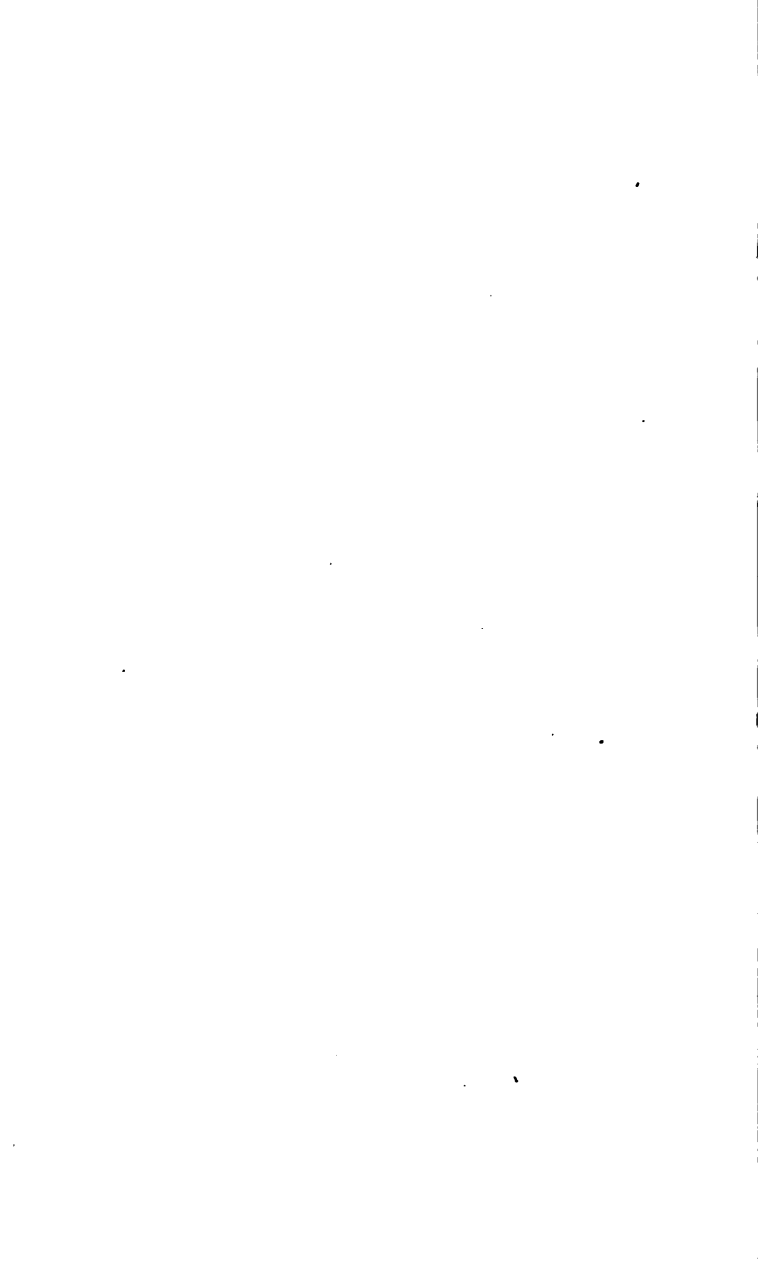
And thar's some wants to know to what side
I belong ;

But I says, "Served him right!" and I go, all
my might,

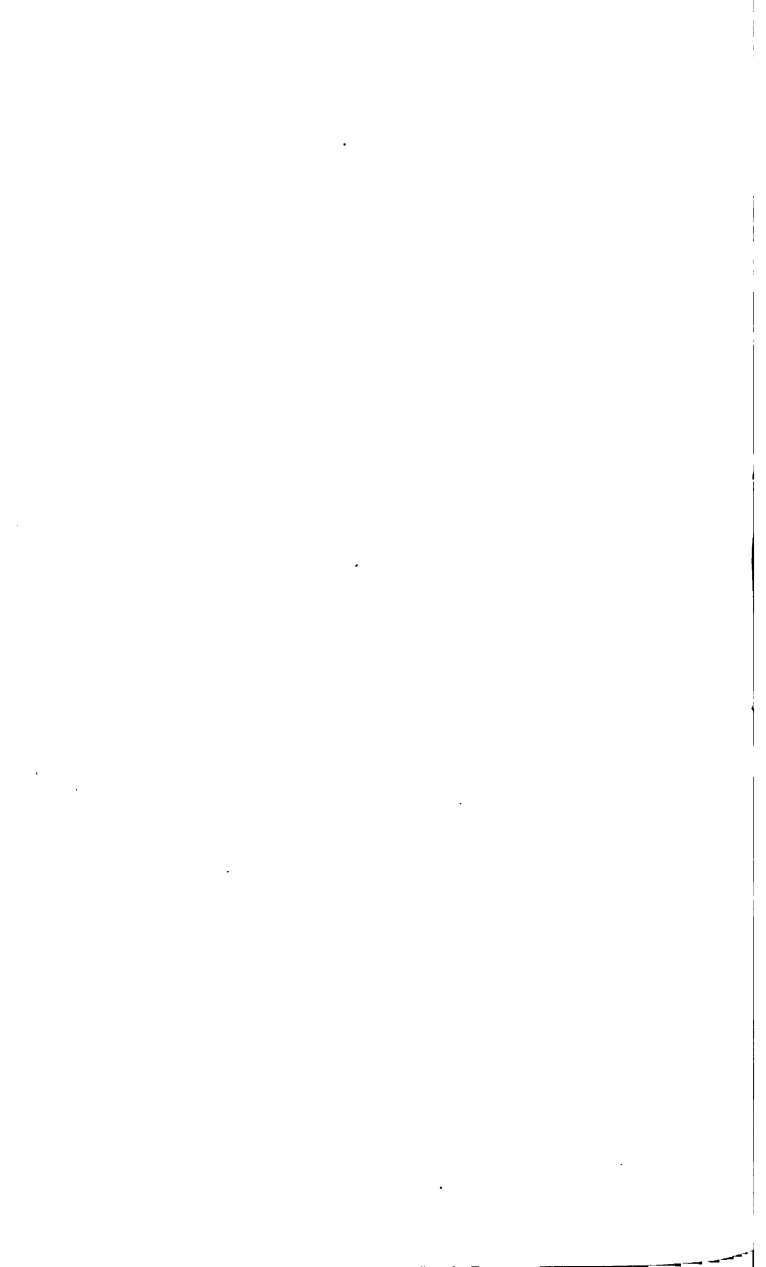
In love or in war, for a fair, stand-up fight ;

And as for the Major—sho ! gals, don't you
know

Thet—Lord!—thar's his step in the garden
below.



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



MISS BLANCHE SAYS.

AND you are the poet, and so you want
Something — what is it? — a theme, a
fancy?

Something or other the muse won't grant

In your old poetical necromancy;

Why, one half your poets — you can't
deny —

Don't know the muse when you chance to
meet her,

But sit in your attics and mope and sigh

For a faineant goddess to drop from the sky,

When flesh and blood may be standing by
Quite at your service, should you but greet her.

What if I told you my own romance?

Women are poets, if you so take them,
One third poet,—the rest what chance
Of man and marriage may choose to make
them.

Give me ten minutes before you go,—

Here at the window we'll sit together,
Watching the currents that ebb and flow;

Watching the world as it drifts below
Up to the hot avenue's dusty glow:

Is n't it pleasant,—this bright June weather?

Well, it was after the war broke out,

And I was a school-girl fresh from Paris;

Papa had contracts, and roamed about,

And I—did nothing—for I was an heiress.

Picked some lint, now I think ; perhaps

Knitted some stockings—a dozen nearly ;

Havelocks made for the soldiers' caps ;

Stood at fair-tables and peddled traps

Quite at a profit. The shoulder-straps

Thought I was pretty. Ah, thank you, really.

Still, it was stupid. Ratatat-tat !

Those were the sounds of that battle summer,

Till the earth seemed a parchment round and

flat,

And every footfall the tap of a drummer ;

And, day by day, down the avenue went

Cavalry, Infantry, all together,

Till my pitying angel one day sent

My fate in the shape of a regiment
That halted, just as the day was spent,
Here at our door in the bright June
weather.

None of your dandy warriors they :

Men from the West, but where, I know not ;
Haggard and travel-stained, worn and gray,
With never a ribbon or lace or bow-knot :
And I opened the window, and leaning there,
I felt in their presence the free winds blow-
ing ;

My neck and shoulders and arms were bare, —
I did not dream they might think me fair,
But I had some flowers that night in my
hair,

And here, on my bosom, a red rose glowing.

And I looked from the window along the line,
Dusty and dirty and grim and solemn,
Till an eye like a bayonet-flash met mine
And a dark face blazed from the darkening
column,
And a quick flame leaped to my eyes and
hair
Till cheeks and shoulders burned all together,
And the next I found myself standing there
With my eyelids wet and my cheeks less
fair,
And the rose from my bosom tossed high in
air
Like a blood-drop falling on plume and feather.
Then I drew back quickly: there came a cheer,
A rush of figures, a noise and tussle,

And then it was over, and high and clear,

My red rose bloomed on his gun's black
muzzle.

Then far in the darkness a sharp voice cried,

And slowly, and steadily, all together,

Shoulder to shoulder, and side to side,

Rising and falling, and swaying wide,

But bearing above them the rose, my pride,

They marched away in the twilight weather.

And I leaned from my window and watched
my rose,

Tossed on the waves of the surging column,
Warmed from above in the sunset glows,

Borne from below by an impulse solemn.

Then I shut the window. I heard no more

Of my soldier friend, my flower neither,

But lived my life as I did before ;
I did not go as nurse to the war, —
Sick folks to me are a dreadful bore, —
So I didn't go to the hospital, either. . .

You smile, O poet, and what do you ?

You lean from your window, and watch life's
column

Trampling and struggling through dust and
dew,

Filled with its purposes grave and solemn ;
And an act, a gesture, a face, — who knows? —

Touches your fancy to thrill and haunt you,
And you pluck from your bosom the verse that
grows,

And down it flies like my red, red rose,
And you sit and dream as away it goes,

And think that your duty is done,— now
don't you?

I know your answer. I'm not yet through.

Look at this photograph — “In the Trench-
es” :

That dead man in the coat of blue

Holds a withered rose in his hand. That
clenches

Nothing! Except that the sun paints true,

And a woman is sometimes prophetic-minded.

And that's my romance. And, poet, you

Take it and mould it to suit your view ;

And who knows but you may find it too

Come back to your heart once more as mine
did.

HALF AN HOUR BEFORE SUPPER.

“SO she’s here, your unknown Dulcinea, —
the lady you met on the train,
And you really believe she would know you if
you were to meet her again?”

“Of course,” he replied, “she would know me;
there never was womankind yet
Forgot the effect she inspired; she excuses,
but does not forget.”

“Then you told her your love?” asked the elder;
the younger looked up with a smile,

“I sat by her side half an hour, — what else
was I doing the while !

“What, sit by the side of a woman as fair as
the sun in the sky,
And look somewhere else lest the dazzle flash
back from your own to her eye ?

“No, I hold that the speech of the tongue be
as frank and as bold as the look,
And I held up herself to herself, — that was
more than she got from her book.”

“Young blood !” laughed the elder ; “no doubt
you are voicing the mode of To-Day ;
But then we old fogies, at least, gave the lady
some chance for delay.

"There's my wife — (you must know) — we first met on the journey from Florence to Rome : It took me three weeks to discover who was she and where was her home ;

"Three more to be duly presented ; three more ere I saw her again ; And a year ere my romance *began* where yours ended that day on the train."

"O, that was the style of the stage-coach ; we travel to-day by express ; Forty miles to the hour," he answered, "won't admit of a passion that's less."

"But what if you make a mistake ?" quoth the elder. The younger half sighed.

"What happens when signals are wrong or switches misplaced?" he replied.

"Very well, I must bow to your wisdom," the elder returned, "but submit
Your chances of winning this woman your boldness has bettered no whit.

"Why, you do not, at best, know her name.
And what if I try your ideal
With something, if not quite so fair, at least more *en règle* and real?

"Let me find you a partner. Nay, come, I insist — you shall follow — this way.
My dear, will you not add your grace to entreat Mr. Rapid to stay?

“ My wife, Mr. Rapid — Eh, what! Why, he’s
gone, — yet he said he would come ;
How rude ! I don’t wonder, my dear, you are
properly crimson and dumb ! ”

DOLLY VARDEN.

DEAR DOLLY! who does not recall
The thrilling page that pictured all
Those charms that held our sense in thrall
Just as the artist caught her, —
As down that English lane she tripped,
In flowered chintz, hat sideways tipped,
Trim-bodiced, bright-eyed, roguish-lipped, —
The locksmith's pretty daughter?

Sweet fragment of the Master's art!
O simple faith! O rustic heart!
O maid that hath no counterpart

In life's dry, dog-eared pages!
Where shall we find thy like? Ah, stay!
Methinks I saw her yesterday
In chintz that flowered, as one might say,
Perennial for ages.

Her father's modest cot was stone,
Five stories high. In style and tone
Composite, and, I frankly own,
Within its walls revealing
Some certain novel, strange ideas:
A Gothic door with Roman piers,
And floors removed some thousand years
From their Pompeiian ceiling.

The small *salon* where she received
Was Louis Quatorze, and relieved
By Chinese cabinets, conceived

Grotesquely by the heathen ;
The sofas were a classic sight, —
The Roman bench (*sedilia* height) ;
The chairs were French, in gold and white,
And one Elizabethan.

And she, the goddess of that shrine,
Two ringéd fingers placed in mine, —
The stones were many carats fine,

And of the purest water, —
Then dropped a courtesy, far enough
To fairly fill her *cretonne* puff
And show the petticoat's rich stuff

That her fond parent bought her.

Her speech was simple as her dress, —
Not French the more, but English less,
She loved ; yet sometimes, I confess,

I scarce could comprehend her.

Her manners were quite far from shy :

There was a quiet in her eye

Appalling to the Hugh who'd try

With rudeness to offend her.

“But whence,” I cried, “this masquerade ?

Some figure for to-night's charade, —

A Watteau shepherdess or maid ?”

She smiled, and begged my pardon :

“Why, surely you must know the name, —

That woman who was Shakespeare's flame,

Or Byron's — well, it's all the same :

“Why, Lord ! I'm Dolly Varden !”

WHAT THE CHIMNEY SANG.

OVER the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew ;
And the Woman stopped, as her babe she
tossed,
And thought of the one she had long since lost,
And said, as her tear-drops back she forced,
“I hate the wind in the chimney.”

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew ;
And the Children said, as they closer drew,
“’T is some witch that is cleaving the black
night through, —

'T is a fairy trumpet that just then blew,
And we fear the wind in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew ;
And the Man, as he sat on his hearth below,
Said, to himself, " It will surely snow,
And fuel is dear, and wages low,
And I'll stop the leak in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew ;
But the Poet listened and smiled, for he
Was Man, and Woman, and Child, all three,
And he said, " It is God's own harmony,
This wind that sings in the chimney."

GUILD'S SIGNAL.

WILLIAM GUILD was engineer of the train which on the 19th of April plunged into Meadow Brook, on the line of the Stonington and Providence Railroad. It was his custom, as often as he passed his home, to whistle an "All's well" to his wife. He was found, after the disaster, dead, with his hand on the throttle-valve of his engine.

TWO low whistles, quaint and clear,

That was the signal the engineer —

That was the signal that Guild, 't is said —
Gave to his wife at Providence,

As through the sleeping town, and thence

Out in the night,

On to the light,

Down past the farms, lying white, he sped!

As a husband's greeting, scant, no doubt,

Yet to the woman looking out,

Watching and waiting, no serenade,

Love-song, or midnight roundelay

Said what that whistle seemed to say :

“To my trust true,

So love to you!

Working or waiting, good night !” it said.

Brisk young bagmen, tourists fine,

Old commuters along the line,

Brakemen and porters glanced ahead,

Smiled as the signal, sharp, intense,

Pierced through the shadows of Providence, —

“Nothing amiss —

Nothing! — it is

Only Guild calling his wife,” they said.

Summer and Winter, the old refrain
Rang o'er the billows of ripening grain,
Pierced through the budding boughs o'erhead,
Flew down the track when the red leaves burned
Like living coals from the engine spurned ;

Sang as it flew :

"To our trust true,
First of all, duty ! Good night !" it said.

And then, one night, it was heard no more
From Stonington over Rhode Island shore,

And the folk in Providence smiled and said,
As they turned in their beds, "The engineer
Has once forgotten his midnight cheer."

One only knew,

To his trust true,

Guild lay under his engine, dead.

CALDWELL OF SPRINGFIELD.

NEW JERSEY.

1780.

HERE's the spot. Look around you.

Above on the height

Lay the Hessians encamped. By that church

on the right

Stood the gaunt Jersey farmers. And here

ran a wall, —

You may dig anywhere and you'll turn up a

ball.

Nothing more. Grasses spring, waters run,

flowers blow,

Pretty much as they did ninety-three years ago.

Nothing more, did I say? Stay one moment;
you've heard

Of Caldwell, the parson, who once preached
the word

Down at Springfield? What, No? Come—
that's bad, why he had

All the Jerseys aflame! And they gave him
the name

Of the "rebel high-priest." He stuck in their
gorge,

For he loved the Lord God,—and he hated
King George!

He had cause, you might say! When the
Hessians that day

Marched up with Knyphausen they stopped on
their way

At the "Farms," where his wife, with a child
in her arms,
Sat alone in the house. How it happened
none knew

But God — and that one of the hireling crew
Who fired the shot! Enough! — there she lay,
And Caldwell, the chaplain, her husband,
away!

Did he bear it — what way? Think of him as
you stand

By the old church to-day; — think of him and
that band

Of militant ploughboys! See the smoke and
the heat

Of that reckless advance, — of that straggling
retreat!

Keep the ghost of that wife, foully slain, in
your view, —

And what could you, what should you, what
would *you* do?

Why, just what *he* did! They were left in
the lurch

For the want of more wadding. He ran to
the church,

Broke the door, stripped the pews, and dashed
out in the road

With his arms full of hymn-books, and threw
down his load

At their feet! Then above all the shouting
and shots,

Rang his voice, — “Put Watts into ‘em, — Boys,
give ‘em Watts!”

And they did. That is all. Grasses spring,
flowers blow

Pretty much as they did ninety-three years
ago.

You may dig anywhere and you'll turn up a
ball,—

But not always a hero like this,—and that's
all.

GRANDMOTHER TENTERDEN.

MASSACHUSETTS SHORE.

1800.

I MIND it was but yesterday, —
The sun was dim, the air was chill ;
Below the town, below the hill,
The sails of my son's ship did fill, —
My Jacob, who was cast away.

He said, "God keep you, mother dear,"
But did not turn to kiss his wife :
They had some foolish, idle strife ;
Her tongue was like a two-edged knife,
And he was proud as any peer.

Howbeit that night I took no note
Of sea nor sky, for all was drear ;
I marked not that the hills looked near,
Nor that the moon, though curved and clear,
Through curd-like scud did drive and float.

For with my darling went the joy
Of autumn woods and meadows brown ;
I came to hate the little town ;
It seemed as if the sun went down
With him, my only darling boy.

It was the middle of the night,
The wind it shifted west-by-south ;
It piled high up the harbor mouth ;
The marshes, black with summer drouth,
Were all abroad with sea-foam white.

It was the middle of the night, —
The sea upon the garden leapt,
And my son's wife in quiet slept,
And I, his mother, waked and wept,
When lo ! there came a sudden light.

And there he stood ! his seaman's dress
All wet and dripping seemed to be ;
The pale blue fires of the sea
Dripped from his garments constantly, —
I could not speak through cowardness.

"I come through night and storm," he said ;
"Through storm and night and death," said he,
"To kiss my wife, if it so be
That strife still holds 'twixt her and me,
For all beyond is Peace," he said.

“The sea is His, and He who sent
The wind and wave can soothe their strife ;
And brief and foolish is our life.”
He stooped and kissed his sleeping wife,
Then sighed, and, like a dream, he went.

Now, when my darling kissed not me,
But her — his wife — who did not wake,
My heart within me seemed to break ;
I swore a vow ! nor thenceforth spake
Of what my clearer eyes did see.

And when the slow weeks brought him not,
Somehow we spake of aught beside ;
For she, — her hope upheld her pride ;
And I, — in me all hope had died,
And my son passed as if forgot.

It was about the next spring-tide,
She pined and faded where she stood ;
Yet spake no word of ill or good ;
She had the hard, cold Edwards' blood
In all her veins, — and so she died.

One time I thought, before she passed,
To give her peace, but ere I spake
Methought, "*He* will be first to break
The news in Heaven," and for his sake
I held mine back until the last.

And here I sit, nor care to roam ;
I only wait to hear his call ;
I doubt not that this day, next fall,
Shall see me safe in port ; where all
And every ship at last comes home.

And you have sailed the Spanish main,
And knew my Jacob? . . . Eh! Mercy!
Ah, God of wisdom! hath the sea
Yielded its dead to humble me!

My boy! My boy! Nay Jacob—turn again!

POEM.

DELIVERED ON THE FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY
OF CALIFORNIA'S ADMISSION INTO THE UNION.

SEPTEMBER 9, 1864.

WE meet in Peace, though from our native
East

The sun that sparkles on our birthday feast
Glanced as he rose in fields whose dewes were
red

With darker tints than those Aurora spread ;
Though shorn his rays,—his welcome disk
concealed

In the dim smoke that veiled each battle-field,

Still striving upward, in meridian pride,
He climbed the walls that East and West
 divide, —
Saw his bright face flashed back from golden
 sand,
And sapphire seas that lave the Western
 land.

Strange was the contrast that such scenes
 disclose
From his high vantage o'er eternal snows :
There War's alarm the brazen trumpet rings, —
Here his love-song the mailed cicala sings ;
There bayonets glitter through the forest
 glades, —
Here yellow cornfields stack their peaceful
 blades ;

There the deep trench where Valor finds a
grave, —

Here the long ditch that curbs the peaceful
wave ;

There the bold sapper with his lighted
train, —

Here the dark tunnel and its stores of gain ;

Here the full harvest and the wain's ad-
vance, —

There the Grim Reaper and the ambulance.

With scenes so adverse, what mysterious
bond

Links our fair fortunes to the shores beyond ?

Why come we here, — last of a scattered
fold, —

To pour new metal in the broken mould ?

To yield our tribute, stamped with Cæsar's face,
To Cæsar, stricken in the market-place?

Ah, Love of Country is the secret tie
That joins these contrasts 'neath one arching
sky ;

Though brighter paths our peaceful steps ex-
plore, —

We meet together at the Nation's door.

War winds her horn, and giant cliffs go down
Like the high walls that girt the sacred town,
And bares the pathway to her throbbing heart,
From clustered village and from crowded mart.

Part of God's providence it was to found
A nation's bulwark on this chosen ground, —
Not Jesuit's zeal nor Pioneer's unrest

Planted these pickets in the distant West ;
But He who first the nation's fate forecast
Placed here His fountains sealed for ages past,
Rock-ribbed and guarded till the coming time
Should fit the people for their work sublime ;
When a new Moses with his rod of steel
Smote the tall cliffs with one wide-ringing peal,
And the old miracle in record told
To the new nation was revealed in Gold.

Judge not too idly that our toils are mean,
Though no new levies marshal on our green ;
Nor deem too rashly that our gains are small,
Weighed with the prizes for which heroes fall.
See, where thick vapor wreathes the battle line ;
There Mercy follows with her oil and wine ;
Or where brown Labor with its peaceful charm

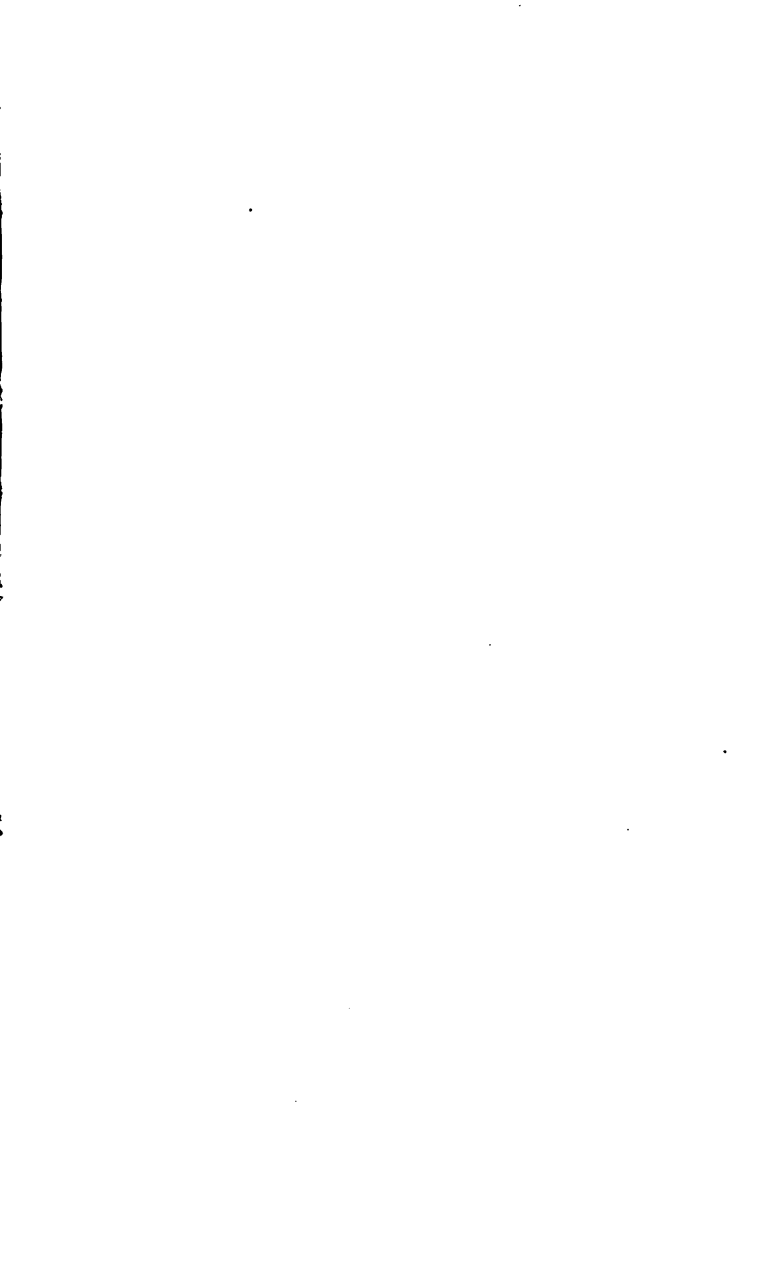
Stiffens the sinews of the Nation's arm,
What nerves its hands to strike a deadlier blow,
And hurl its legions on the distant foe?
Lo! for each town new rising o'er our State
See the foe's hamlet waste and desolate,
While each new factory trains a chimney tall,
Like a new mortar, on the foeman's wall.

For this, O brothers, swings the fruitful vine,
Spread our broad pastures with their countless
kine ;

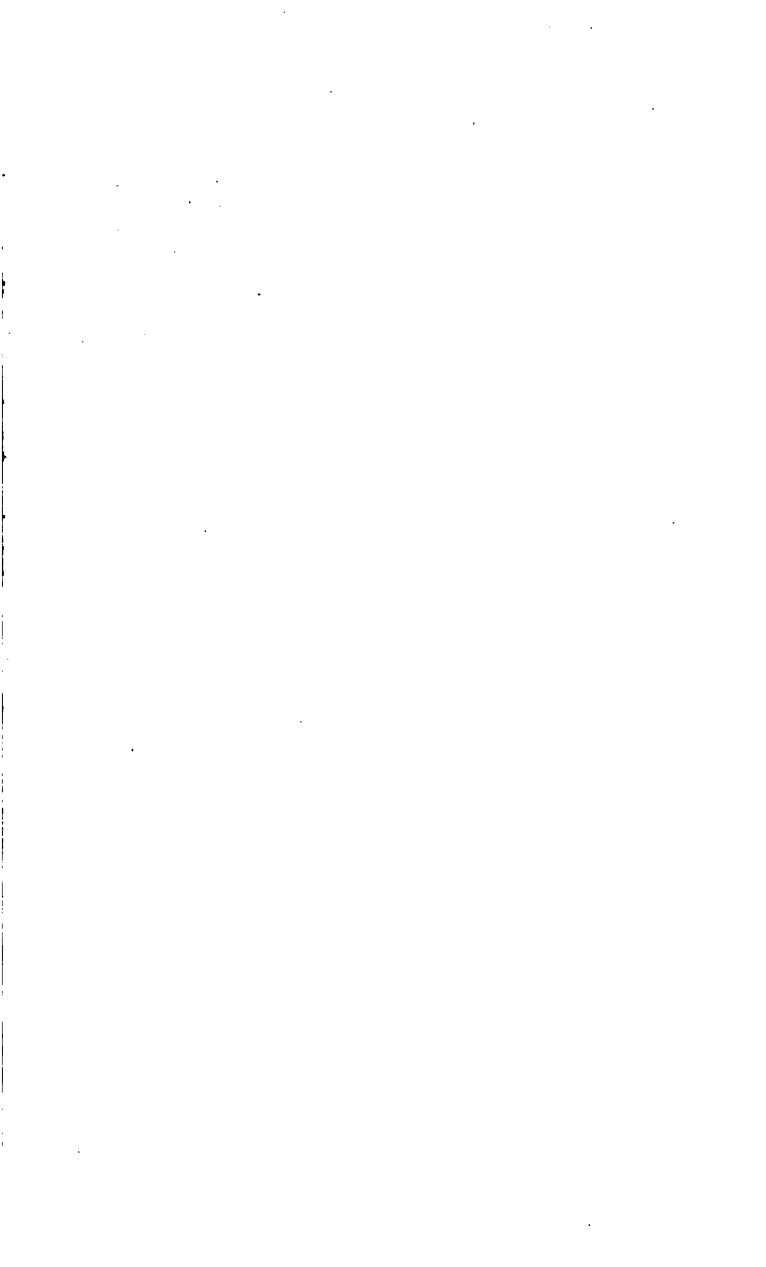
For this o'erhead the arching vault springs clear,
Sunlit and cloudless for one half the year ;
For this no snow-flake, e'er so lightly pressed,
Chills the warm impulse of our mother's breast.
Quick to reply, from meadows brown and sere,
She thrills responsive to Spring's earliest tear ;

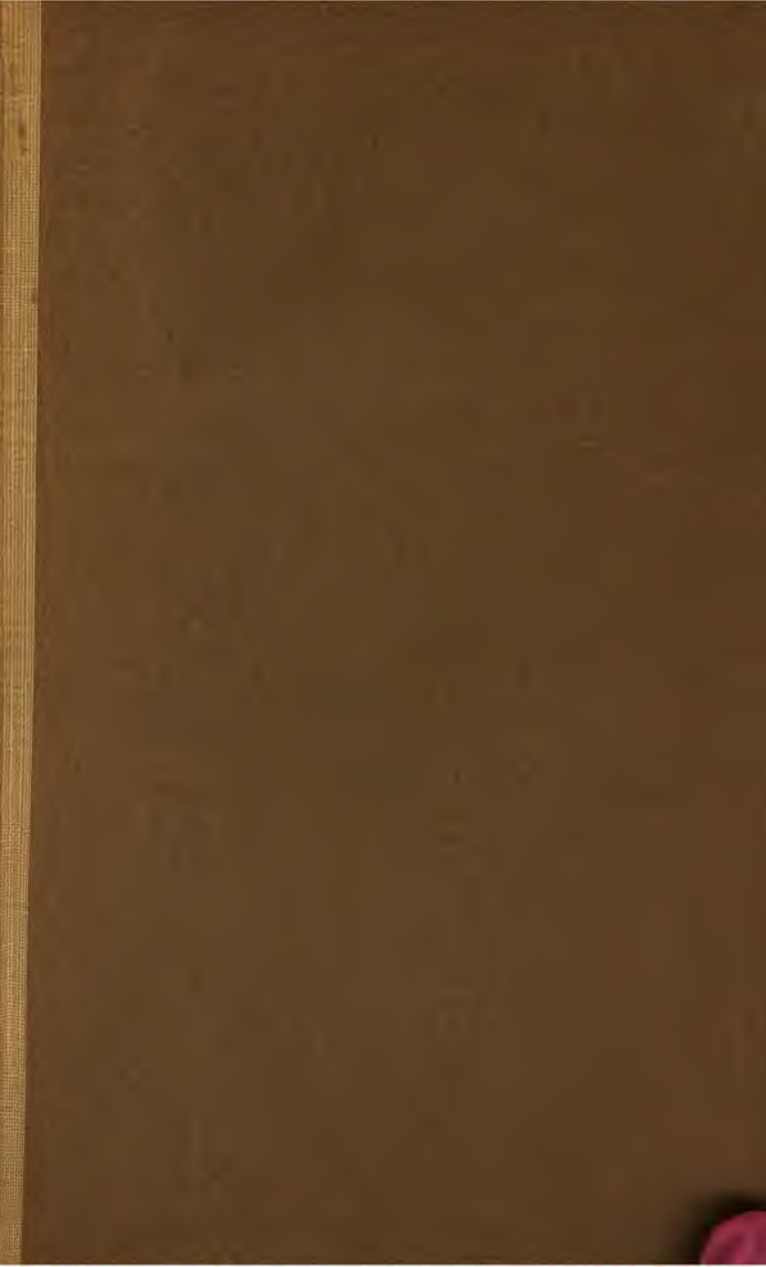
Breaks into blossom, flings her loveliest rose
Ere the white crocus mounts Atlantic snows ;
And the example of her liberal creed
Teaches the lesson that to-day we need.

Thus ours the lot with peaceful, generous hand
To spread our bounty o'er the suffering land ;
As the deep cleft in Mariposa's wall
Hurls a vast river splintering in its fall, —
Though the rapt soul who stands in awe below
Sees but the arching of the promised bow, —
Lo ! the far streamlet drinks its dews unseen,
And the whole valley wakes a brighter green.



Mr. J. W.







1935



